

HAMNET BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY 3 JULY 2005

HAMNET is the Official Emergency Communications network of the South African Radio League that provides emergency communication to local, regional and national authorities, when requested to do so.

Bulletin compiled and prepared by Francois ZS6BUU

IN THE BULLETIN TODAY:-

BULLETINS AROUND THE COUNTRY GAREC TAMPERE CONFERENCE

HAMNET BULLETINS AROUND THE COUNTRY

KZN Sunday morning at 07H00 on their local VHF repeaters with a relay on 7.070MHz. KZN also have a Wednesday evening call-up and meeting on their 2M repeater system.

The National Bulletin at 17H00 CAT on 7,070MHz in the 40M band with a relay on 145,700MHz in the greater Johannesburg area.

The Gauteng North bulletin will follow immediately after the National Bulletin on 145,725MHz in the Pretoria area on Sundays.

North West Province have a club bulletin on Mondays, which includes a Hamnet segment at 19H00 local on 3,750Mhz in the 80M band as well as their local repeater on 145.737.5Mhz.

Hamnet Western Cape Province meets on Wednesdays at 20H30 local on 145:700MHz, relayed on 3,674MHz.

The HAMNET Bulletin is sent to all those of whom I have an e-mail address and also sent out on packet by Rudi, ZS6DX.

Please note, this bulletin is available for download from the web site of the SARL under the heading "HAMNET".

GAREC TAMPERE CONFERENCE REPORT BACK

An unforgettable experience and it's going to be difficult to stick to the written document and not to add snippets here and there!

Not so much going halfway around the world in a matter of 18 hours, but enjoying the privilege of meeting, discussing and voting on issues that affect so many Amateurs involved with emergency communication around the world.

Much of what was discussed over a period of 2 days will eventually appear on the web site of the IARU Region 1. However, there was consensus that various procedures should be improved and implemented as soon as the next IARU Region 1, 2 and 3 meeting takes place.

Not that Region 2 & 3 was excluded from these proposals! On the contrary! Both Region 2 and 3 had representation by way of Rod Stafford W6ROD from

the ARRL and Jay Oka JA1TRC from Japan. When the next IARU regional Conference comes up, two issues proposed at the Conference will be discussed and decisions taken.

The major issues under discussion were; a closer working relationship with various emergency organisations around the world, the establishment of international emergency communication frequencies, known provisionally as “Centre of Activity Frequencies” and the possible implementation of an international Manual on emergency communication.

Special guests at the conference were Ms. Bharathi Parsad VU2RBI who featured in the CNN clip of the role Amateur Radio played after the 2004 tsunami and two delegates from Sri Lanka. They were Kisal Epa 4S7KE and Asantha Illesinghe 4S7AK. Bharathi eventually got the nickname of the “Angel of the Air” because of the role she played relaying messages from the Andaman Island. Kesal & Asantha are available on Echolink daily between 15H30 and 17H30 UTC on the call sign 4S7QS-R for those who wish to meet them.

Monday morning up to coffee time was confined to the special guests attending the opening session including the Minister of the Interior of the Finish Government, Dr. Pekka Tarjanne.

After coffee, we got down to business with 10 countries presenting their Emergency Communication Structures as they are at present. This included South Africa. I am not going to elaborate on each presentation but suffice to say that there is a lot of common ground within the various structures.

Hans Zimmermann F/HB9AQS, now living in France, who represents Amateur Radio on the IARU Secretariat, was interested to hear how these various emergency groups were formed, how they are currently structured, any problems in running them and what is done to train the various members of each group.

The conference also reviewed the possibilities to further improve the contributions amateur radio service can make to the goals of the World Summit on the Information Society. These are;

The existing structures and agreements of cooperation between national amateur radio organisations and institutional providers of the emergency and disaster response services. The role of the amateur radio service in national and international humanitarian assistance in disaster prevention The role of amateur radio service in capacity building, training and improving global affordable connectivity. The need for a supportive regulatory framework as part of an enabling environment to improve access to communication.

Other issues included a review of the original Tampere Convention of 1998 which was a convention of intent to assist in relief operations, Trans border activities, CEPT Recommendations, and so on.

One does not have the time to discuss all the issues but suffice to say that the presentations made were excellent. The presentations from Turkey, Israel and

India were very good indeed but what we all found interesting the next day were the presentations by India and Sri Lanka after the tsunami.

Some graphic pictures were displayed as well as the problems they encountered after the disaster. I made good use of my digital camera and was surprised how good the shots I took of their presentation from an extremely large screen came out. These pictures will be featured in a presentation I wish to do around the country soon.

The item of dedicated emergency frequencies then came up for discussion briefly but that evening on a boat trip on one of the lakes, The Netherlands and South Africa decided that the next day we will push for a decision to put this forward to the next IARU conference.

This proposal was adopted the next day.

The issue of an international Manual was discussed but this is something that will probably be discussed at a future GAREC meeting as the gathered countries indicated that this could be the beginning of more GAREC type meetings for the future.

The Conference concluded the following;

The amateur radio service has the proven capabilities and capacities to serve the international community through its global networks of infrastructure-independent stations. Beyond its character as a global network, amateur radio service is an invaluable resource of skilled operators, trained and experienced in maintaining communications under the most adverse conditions. The amateur radio service provides continuous adult education, retraining and access to the limited radio frequency spectrum allocated to the use of amateur radio.

In other words, lets not forget that the radio spectrum is a very small but effective natural resource and we should use it, guard and protect it at all times to ensure that we do not lose it due to pressures from other institutions who are relentlessly making inroads or applying pressures to reduce what is available to us.

In general, a wonderful 2 days of discussions, interaction and camaraderie. This is difficult to put into words!

What I personally enjoyed was meeting people like David Smith, G8ILD who is responsible for RAYNET our counterpart organisation in the UK. Paul Gaskell, G4MWD with who I had been in almost weekly contact since the decision was taken to attend this conference. Much of our correspondence was copied to Hans Zimmermann, of the IARU.

Lighter moments when talking Afrikaans to the Dutch contingent and finding that we can understand each other quite well! Meeting people from India and Sri Lanka who were personally involved in the tsunami!

A point of interest, I questioned the Sri Lankan delegates as to the truth behind

the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka having an amateur radio station installed in his official residence to keep track of what was happening in his country.

Oh yes, the said, all very true and a turning point in the value placed by their Government on amateur radio as an alternative means of emergency communication.

Interesting off the cuff presentations on items not really related to emergency communication, but when time allowed, Gordon Adams G3LEQ gave us an interesting 15 minute presentation on NVIS Near Vertical Incidence Skywave for short distance communication in the 5MHz band. Plus a host of other items that slipped through the cracks now and again.

That's what made this meeting so interesting! Much of which will be discussed when I plan to do a trip around the country in the not too distant future.

However, the bottom line; It is interesting to note the small number of people per capita per country actually involved in emergency communication! And the reason? The exams set in some countries are of an extremely high standard. Emergency Communication as an adjunct to its normal field of activity almost becomes a mini profession in some countries, especially where natural disasters are common.

And so it should be. In dire situations, a Country and many thousands of people depend on your skills, competence and dedication. I personally would also like to add the word passion as well. You will never know how important you are until you find yourself in a life and death situation where your skills are tested to the limit!

It was a pleasure to represent the SARL, Hamnet and South Africa at this conference and I again wish to thank SASAR, the Dept of Transport and Council who approved my attendance of this Conference.

I am going to try and read this, but for those who wish to have a look at the presentations and some photographs of the conference, the website is as follows; www.rientola.fi/oh3ag/garec/index.html

That is all for today. Comments and suggestions to: zs6buu@uskonet.com

Bulletin ends.